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From the Other Side of the Street

Marketing to Libraries

by Kathleen Ketterman

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Editorial note: this article incorporates helpful notes from Janet Flowers (UNC-CH), David Mitchell (Guilford Publications), Lee Willoughby (Duke University Press), and Tom White (University of California Press). Thanks to each of them. —KK

On November 6, as a preconference to the Charleston Conference, many of us publishers took a metaphorical walk across the street to see what the perspective looked like from the other side. The day-long "Marketing to Libraries" workshop, sponsored by the Association of American University Presses and organized by the AAUP Library/University Press Relations Committee, was packed with sessions and lively debate. About ninety participants comprised of publishers (many commercial publishers as well as university presses) and invited librarians and vendors, shared insights and learned from one another about what's happened in the library world in the last 10 years or so that affects the business of libraries, vendors, and publishers.

As publishers, we had been wondering whether libraries were still our "best" customers. We knew that several factors — approval plans, paper-preferred options, the impact of electronic reserves, consortia purchasing, interlibrary loan, site licensing, outsourcing, the role of vendors, the impact of electronic media — would need to be understood in order to assess the current state of the library market.

We wondered whether unit sales to libraries would continue to decline — especially for the cloth binding when published in a dual edition — and whether publishers could expect continued cancellations of our journals? We also hoped to learn how to effectively promote our books and journals to the library market including to special libraries.

Julia Gammon, acquisitions librarian at the University of Akron and, in her spare time, marketing manager at the University of Akron Press, moderated the opening session devoted to reviewing a decade's worth of change in the library community. Other speakers were **Barbara Ford**, Executive Director, Library Services, at Virginia Commonwealth University and president-elect of ALA, and **Barbara von Wahlde**, associate vice president for university libraries, SUNY at Buffalo. Common threads from all included technological change, diminishing resources, and the need for outsourcing a variety of tasks. Another fact of life for the library community is their concern with funding and the need for fundraising and the continual search for endowments.

The impact of electronic resources and the realities of dealing with new technologies in the library and on campus has resulted in the necessity of training both the staff and the end-user — a process that has slowed the revolution in some places and influenced purchasing decisions at others. Customer service has become an important consideration, as has the ability to participate in purchasing consortia. The presence of approval plans and library consortia will likely have the greatest influence on the conducting of business

between libraries and publishers.

Barbara Ford highlighted some other current issues and trends. She said that "customer service" is the catch phrase for librarians today. Libraries are coordinating purchases to avoid duplication, debating ownership vs. access, concerned about copyright issues, worried about the economic viability of the monograph and the costs of the virtual library. She emphasized that librarians need timely updates from their vendors and publishers on the status and price changes of products. Ford pointed to several projects and trends that have altered the library at VCU. First and foremost is the **Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA)**, an online library created with the support of a \$5 million start-up grant. Because there are fewer in-house resources for managing the library's mission, there is an increased emphasis on value-added services from vendors and more outsourcing in general. At VCU, the success and popularity of lifelong learning programs is influencing the decision-making process. Ford also noted an increase in the number of electronic refer-

ence sources, an increase in the number of transactions conducted over networks, and a strong desire for interface between systems. Ford characterized the search for a coherent, useful, longtime-use electronic publishing method from among the various distribution formats as an attempt to "decentralize, globalize, and harmonize" the flow of information. She ventured to say that the ability of consortia to make joint investments and the development of resource-sharing has allowed libraries to be bolder and take greater risks on their purchases. She noted VIVA, now in its third year operating as a consortium, is beginning to acquire and work with producers of new electronic products. There are more than twenty such consortia throughout the U.S., Ford said, which are securing licensing agreements for large groups of users at once.

Barbara von Wahlde sees on her campus a graying of the faculty that is affecting attitudes toward the use of technology. SUNY libraries are also focusing on customer service — a focus that makes CD-ROMs a potentially unattractive format due to the increased staff time required to train users. CD-ROMs that run on standalone stations are much preferable to those that create interface complications. Von Wahlde focused on the difference a decade had made in SUNY-Buffalo. In 1986, she reported, the library did not have an online catalog, the staff numbered 200, there were no CD-ROMs, there was no in-house database (dial-in services were charged back to the enduser), approval plans had been in use since 1980, and subject bibliographers made acquisition decisions. In the span of a decade, the staff has been decreased to 186, there is a campus network, there is a focus on a client-server environment, there is an increase in collaboration within the SUNY system (i.e., sharing databases), an increase in services such as interlibrary loan, and the collection is being digitized as a method of preservation. The collection development process has also changed significantly: the

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acquisitions budget has decreased by \$500,000; there have been decreases in purchases of foreign language editions, British editions, and reprints; and an increase in purchases of paperbacks.

Von Wahlde, as did others throughout the day, noted: "A good review is a key element in selecting a book. The key is to have the review out when librarians are making purchasing decisions."

Gammon raised the important distinction between access to and ownership of information — a distinction that has created an increase in consortium purchases. The question of whether — or even how — to archive information when the library does not "own it," was another point often mentioned as of great concern to librarians. According to Gammon, her library sees itself as purchasing pieces of information, not necessarily texts. After a study at Akron revealed that only 10% of the periodicals collection was being actively circulated, they reduced the number of their subscriptions and increased reliance on document delivery services. In comparing 1986 to 1996, Gammon said they have 1,500 fewer journal subscriptions. And the numbers of documents delivered have moved from zero to 500 in 1996. Akron also has interlibrary loan arrangements that can provide a book in 48 hours. Gammon emphasized the need for resource-sharing and the usefulness of consortia. At the same time, she noted that license agreements for consortial arrangements are very confusing, but are important because of the "huge" portion of the acquisitions budget allocated to electronic publications.

In a session on collection development, publishers learned or were reminded that not all libraries are the same. Size and type of library have a widely divergent impact on how much and what is collected. **Gina Overcash**, Davidson College, and **Alice Peery** from the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, had very different collection development needs from **John Rutledge**, UNC-CH. When asked to provide a description of what collection development is, Rutledge said, "Collection development is organizing book selection, managing the growth, and, increasingly, representing the collections to their potential users."

Peery explained that public libraries were more committed to circulation than building collections. "The title's potential use is the most significant factor in selection," she said. The selection decisions at her library are made by committee and they rely on their circulation figures and focus on what is of current interest. Price is very important especially when buying multiple copies for branch libraries and paper is preferred because of cost. Advance reviews in *Booklist*, *Library Journal*, and *Publishers Weekly* are helpful in deciding what to purchase but cannot be relied on exclusively because they wouldn't get everything their patrons want. Peery finds publishers' catalogs useful if they are well-designed, easy to read, and clearly explain the content. Other factors that influence public library purchasing are patron requests and the need for replacement and retrospective buying. Having information available from vendors about the contents of books is crucial and Peery wants information about two to four months ahead of publication. Publishing delays and cancellations "create havoc." Peery sees a big future for electronic products in public libraries and prefers to provide patrons with information online.

Davidson is a private liberal arts college and **Gina Overcash** said that, in contrast to most other academic libraries, her materials budget had increased. Davidson's faculty has responsibility for collection development in their fields. Overcash said she depends on reviews — including those in *The New York Times Book Review* and even in local papers — to tell her which is the best book to buy when there are competing books to choose from. Quality of content is more important than price. Davidson buys both cloth and paperback but re-binds the paperback in cloth before shelving. Publishers' Web pages are increasingly important for retrieving information. And she believes that publishers of electronic products need to be clear and consistent when stating their licensing and purchasing terms.

Representing the large, ARL-type library, **John Rutledge** spends 20% of his time on the actual selection process. He is beginning to use publisher Web pages, too, to search for the table of contents when he needs more information about a book or journal in order to make a final decision to purchase. Rutledge also is beginning to use library Web pages to represent the collection for faculty and students. He does not rely on reviews because he wants the book in the library prior to reviews. Other librarians mentioned that they were using electronic newsletters to inform faculty of new resources in the library. Librarians generally are having to devote significant time to training patrons on the use of electronic resources and how to find information on print holdings in the online catalog and to perform other electronic searches. The title of a book is often the principle source of information and should contain keywords that enable users to search and find the book(s) and journal articles they are looking for. Rutledge believes that plain, descriptive titles are best.

Following collection development, the library-vendor relationship was explored in depth by **Janet Flowers**, Acquisitions Librarian at UNC-CH, and two vendors, **Matt Nauman** of Blackwell North America and **John Secor** of Yankee Book Peddler. Publishers have not always shown a keen appreciation of the role of the vendor in the acquisitions process so Janet described the reasons that libraries must use the services of vendors rather than buying direct from publishers: 1) economy of scale, 2) bibliographic expertise, 3) identification and pre-selection of titles, and 4) value-added services. Flowers offered her own view of what the publisher's relationship with the vendor should be. Publishers should keep vendors informed about their titles, especially any changes to the title, price, and availability and keep information on their Web pages accurate and up-to-date. Publishers should supply titles in a timely manner and provide management data to vendors as needed. Finally, she suggested that publishers find out how vendors are profiling their titles. The only time a library might deal directly with a publisher is when it is a rush order; an expensive book; if the publisher is offering special terms; or when the publisher is the sole source.

Matt Nauman spoke about the advantages of approval plans and how vendors work with libraries to customize approval plan profiles. He urged publishers to work with vendors and to cooperate rather than compete. Nauman believes that vendors need a higher level of partnership with publishers.

John Secor challenged publishers to "change their mind sets." He, too, urged publishers to work more closely with vendors rather than competing with them. Publishers should be asking what they can do for libraries and shift their emphasis from selling to collaborating. Throughout the workshop, every librarian expressed the preference to work with vendors whenever possible. Secor argued that vendors are better equipped to perform the selling and distribution functions and that publishers should concentrate their efforts on areas of strength like editing, design and production, and marketing and promotion. He also said that publishers can supply better information and if they supply it electronically it helps the vendor add value to their services to libraries. Secor thinks that publishers need to become part of the "value chain" and to consult more often with vendors the way that libraries consult with vendors. He challenged publishers to consider outsourcing distribution in order to devote more resources to publishing better books. More efficient service to vendors (by shipping direct from the bindery, for example), means more efficient delivery to libraries.

Many publishers came especially to hear the next session: Do direct promotions, telemarketing, and sales calls to libraries work? Moderated by **Richard Rocco**, Oxford, this lively panel had to be continued after the lunch break. **Athena Michael** from Wiley and **Rebecca Seger** of McGraw-Hill talked about their direct mail and telemarketing efforts and **Susi Seiler**, University of Miami, and **Gina Overcash** gave their reactions to such efforts. Again, it was clear that not all librarians think alike nor have the same attitude

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toward direct selling. Librarians said that duplicate mailings are wasteful. Some librarians consider the information provided by direct mail to be useful. "But send only one piece, please — not eight." Catalogs are also useful but not as a selection tool. One of the librarians preferred access to a publisher's catalog on the Web while another felt that the Web did not replace the need for printed catalogs. Being alerted by email to updates on a publishers Web site could be useful. The librarians attending this workshop do not like the disruption of telemarketing calls. However, a phone call to alert a librarian about a very special offer that would be coming to them in the mail or about a major new, expensive multi-volume work might be welcome. Likewise, visits by sales representatives can be disruptive but could also be helpful (but only by appointment). Michael views these calls as information exchanges and does not use them to encourage buying direct. There was some general agreement that email distribution of announcements, use of bulletin boards for posting information, and publishers' Web sites were marketing tools that might be useful to collection development and acquisitions librarians. In fact, during this workshop and the subsequent **Charleston Conference**, more mention of the Web and of publishers' home pages were made than at previous conferences.

Other insights during this session included: exhibits at library conferences are useful for testing electronic products; demo disks of e-products are not that helpful since libraries need to know how it's going to run in their own environment; publishers' seasonal announcement ads were not useful to librarians; Web sites provide librarians with information about new journals; librarians want sample issues of new journals; publishers should be encouraged to participate in the dialogue (dialogue?) on the **Acqnet** listserv.

Modeled after the **Charleston Conference** lively lunches, three topics were slated for discussion: direct marketing, a continuation of the discussion from the previous session; copyright / electronic reserves / fair use; and electronic ordering (EDI) and how publishers' business practices make things easier or more difficult for libraries. In the EDI lunch session, it was suggested that librarians would be better served if vendors and publishers worked together to achieve EDI. Librarians, though, even if a publisher could accept orders via EDI, would presumably still work through their vendor of choice.

The special library market was represented by **Kenneth Soehner**, Acting Chief Librarian, at the Watson Library of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and **David Pachter**, from Fedlink. They both reminded us of the differences among libraries and what and how they purchase. Soehner noted that he did not often get solicited by publishers or subscription agents. Fedlink is set up to "help federal libraries and information centers obtain the most value for their information service dollars." Fedlink is probably most similar to the consortial arrangements increasingly used by academic libraries. Their contracts for acquiring publications are developed by professional federal librarians and managed by contracting officers at the Library of Congress. Fedlink uses the same vendors, document delivery providers, and other online retrieval services as do non-government libraries.

A panel on selling journals and serials was moderated by **Matthew Bedell**, Journals Manager, Duke University Press, and included **Janet Fisher**, Journals Manager, MIT Press and **Daniel H. Jones**, Assistant Library Director for Collection Development, Briscoe Library, University of Texas Health Science Center. Since many libraries are only buying new journals when dropping old ones, it is important for publishers to send adequate information on each new journal including the title, price, frequency, and where it is abstracted. Fisher thinks it is now taking twice as long to break even on a new journal (about six to eight years). Publishers are turning down new journals because the investment in launching a new journal is so high and the payoff takes so long. Electronic

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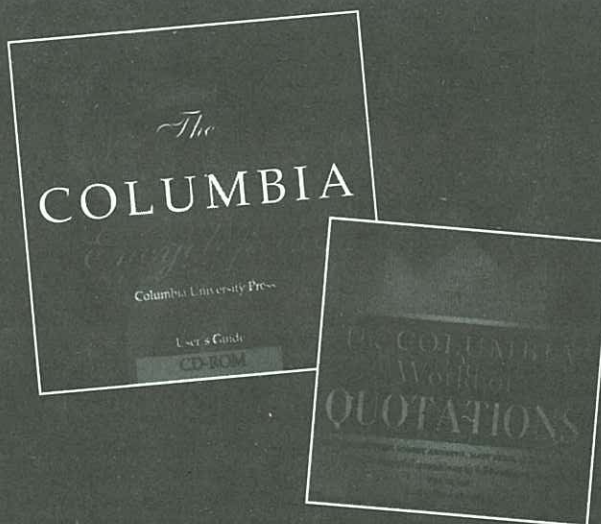
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another fine small press distributor, ISBS, with an average turnaround time of 11 days. Publishers with turnaround times averaging two weeks include Lawrence Erlbaum, Taylor & Francis, Facts On File, JAI, Edwin Mellon, Norton, Springer Verlag, Kluwer, Lynne Rienner, McGraw Hill, Penguin, Farrar Straus, Addison Wesley, Sage, Saint Martin's and many university presses such as Harvard, MIT, SUNY, Kansas, Chicago, Cornell, Hawaii, California, New York, Texas, New Mexico, North Carolina and Cambridge. I think we can all agree that these publishers provide excellent service.

There are many publishers with a turnaround time of three weeks or less, and this timeframe seems to me to be the reasonable limit. Three weeks enables those publishers


who can only accept mailed purchase orders to react promptly to booksellers. Among these are DeGruyter, Noyes Data, Plenum, Little Brown, Blackwell Scientific, Basil Blackwell, ME Sharpe, American Chemical Society, and some university presses including Yale (Harvard beat you), Princeton, Johns Hopkins, Iowa, Indiana and Rutgers.

"Very little of [increased quality] had anything to do with computers and had everything to do with people."

While not outstanding, these publishers provide adequate service on turnaround time.

This leaves thousands of publishers with slow fulfillment. Fortunately, many of the books that libraries buy are from the publishers named above, and dozens of smaller presses that space does not permit listing. Among the larger publishers who need to

improve service, with their average fulfillment days in parentheses are Gale (22) and Elsevier (26). These publishers are not by any means giving poor service, but it would help everyone if they could reduce delivery time by a week or two.

With thousands of publishers taking four, five and six or more weeks to fill orders, one has to lament the waste generated, waste that you pay for. Books that sit in a warehouse for extra weeks are consuming cashflow and increasing borrowing, a real cost. Books that take extra weeks to deliver indicate management and shipping systems that must be wasteful in more ways than just time. The question that needs an answer is: If Ingram can ship within twenty-four hours the books it stocks from hundreds of publishers, why can't publishers ship their own books that quickly? 

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journals take even longer to sell due to lengthy negotiations for site licenses. Fisher thinks electronic journals require a different sales approach. MIT gives free samples, discounts the first year's price, and offers incentives for group buys either through library consortia or for a single library buying a group of titles.

Daniel Jones asked: "Who is the customer — the library, reader or author?" He believes that publishers have viewed libraries as an open checkbook and that serials prices have been increasing at an unreasonably high rate. Journals prices have increased at a rate of 16% in 1996 when the CPI has only increased between 3% and 4%. Because 90% of his budget is spent on serials (which he hopes to reduce to 85%), Jones has to carefully consider whether the usage and cost per use is worth the price of the subscription. If the cost per use is over \$50, he cancels. Jones recommends that to avoid cancellation, keep the price low but keep the editorial quality high so that the journal gets used. Jones only subscribes to a new journal if an old one is canceled. And to survive, a journal must be indexed. Publishing a journal on schedule is a significant factor when deciding whether to cut a subscription. Librarians might assume that irregularly published journals mean the field itself does not produce enough research to warrant its own journal. Journals are supposed to publish research quickly and lengthy time delays could mean there is nothing new to say and that the research itself might age while waiting to be published. Jones had some other recommendations for publishers: work with agents but avoid exclusive distribution deals; use new EDI standards; avoid gimmicks; electronic journals are attractive in the abstract but present the library with a whole new set of challenges and publishers should provide institutional-wide access.

The workshop ended by focusing its final session on shifting resources for the acquisition of non-print media. Moderator, Kate Wittenberg, Editor-in-Chief, Columbia University Press, introduced Michael Jensen, Electronic Publisher, Johns Hopkins University Press; Joan Grant, Collection Development Librarian, NYU; Alan Bayert, Sales Manager, *Britannica Online* to discuss how acquisition decisions are made for electronic resources, who makes them, where the money comes from, how they are ordered, the role of wholesalers and subscription agents, and current rights and fair use in the electronic environment.

Joan Grant said that she first decides whether the electronic product in question fits generally within their overall collection, regardless of format. She expects to find value-added in electronic journals over print. Once she decides the fit is right, she asks about access. Is the searching intuitive or will it require one-on-one help? Will additional workstations or special equipment be necessary? If it is Internet-based, will access be restricted during busy times of the day when the Internet is slow. Grant finds direct mail important for electronic publications (but not for traditional monographs). She likes to be able to preview and test CD-ROMs, databases, and other Internet-based products before purchase. Publishers should know that the selectors may be the ones arranging the demos, but will not be placing the actual order, nor should they receive the invoice, nor receive the final product. Other concerns voiced by Grant were site licenses, fair use (library can't police use), and the standardization of contract terms. Key issues they watch for is whether the license agreement permits fair use by authorized users with unlimited viewing and printing and includes a broad definition of authorized onsite users. Grant recommends that publishers look at the University of Texas legal counsel Web site for a description of what libraries should look for before signing licenses. Also, the University of California SunSite has a listing of what to look for when acquiring digital resources (<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Info/principles.html>).

Both Jensen and Bayert described their approach to selling *Project Muse* and *Britannica Online*, respectively. Bayert noted that the initial sale has been a long, slow process. It takes between two months and one year to finalize a contract. Most subscribers to *Project Muse* and *EBO* are through consortia. Kate Wittenberg described a joint experimental project between Columbia, Oxford, and Garland to put monographs online. These will be offered free and after a few years they will decide whether access can be sold.

If anything, this workshop had too much information packed into one day. To quote from a few of the comments on the workshop's exit survey: "Information overload (which is not the worst criticism!)." "Great idea for a workshop. Should try to 'piggyback' with Charleston Conference more often." "Very valuable — one of the most interesting days I've spent at the Charleston Conference." "I think the workshop overall was quite useful and should be held on some sort of regular basis — a continuing education course for publishers!" 